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*The Distinctions amongst Protestants,
not inconsistent with the Unity of
the Church.*

A
SERMON

Preached at
TROWBRIDGE,

IN THE
County of **WILTS.**

Novemb. 5. 1729.

By **THOMAS LUCAS.** K

Τὴν ἑκκλῆσιαν ἀγαπήτω. Iguat. Ep. ad Philadelph.

*Ecclesia una est qua in multitudinem latius incremento
fecundisatis extenditur, quomodo solis multi radii sed lumen
unum, & rami arboris multi, sed robur unum tenaci radice
fundatum. Cypr. de unitate Eccles.*

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not inconsistent with the Unity of
the Church.

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SERMON



THOMAS LUCAS

IN THE

Courcy of WILTS.

November 5. 1759.

By THOMAS LUCAS.

The above is a copy of the original
manuscript, and is not a printed
copy, as the original is in the
possession of the British Museum.

LONDON.

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GAL. III. 28.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

TIS too plain to be deny'd, that the Persecution is contrary to the genius of the Christian Religion, and no ways adapted to convince the Judgment either of Truth or Error, tho' tis a discredit to any Religion, which owes its establishment to it, and is not in the least countenanced, but, on the contrary, is condemn'd, by the Conduct and Example as well as by the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles: Yet, to the shame of the Church be it spoken, it has often been used not only to compel Infidels to own her Doctrine, and come into her Communion, but even to oblige Christians themselves to profess and practise what they can't believe, and to submit to the decision of their Neighbours, in matters which God and Nature have left to their own Choice and Determination. Nor is it less evident, that the Infamy of this scandalous Practice has always been varnished over with a pretended Zeal for the Unity of the Church.

The Unity of the Church, say the Papiſts, is a matter of the utmost importance, and must be

maintain'd and secur'd by all possible means. Schisms and Divisions are Evils of so dangerous and fatal a Nature, that the Authors of them cannot be treated with too much Rigour and Severity : And we find, say they, that nothing short of outward Force and Compulsion is sufficient to preserve this Unity, by the Schisms and Divisions amongst Protestants, where Men are allow'd to judge and choose for themselves. They, in consequence of their Liberty, break into Parties, separate one from another, and thus violate and destroy their own Unity. 'Tis therefore necessary to take from the People, by the secular Arm this Liberty of Choice, in order to prevent such mischievous Consequences. And this Method, if it does not convince the Judgment, yet if it prevents or suppresses a formal Schism, is of singular Service to the Church, which is sufficient to justify the use of it. The very same way of Reasoning the Patrons of Persecution in Protestant Countrys have taken up from time to time, to countenance and justify their uncharitable and barbarous treatment of their Brethren that dissent from them. The Unity of the Church, say they, cannot be too warmly contended for; Schisms cannot be too much guarded against : And so far as Liberty of private Judgment, and a Toleration of scrupulous Consciences, are generally abused to the Violation of this Unity ; 'tis highly necessary to use outward Compulsion, and to call in the help of the secular Power, that those who will not be content to think and believe as the Church does, may be restrain'd from setting up a schismatical Worship to the disturbance of her Peace.

Far am I from designing, in the following Sermon, to lessen the concern of any for the Unity of the Church ; 'tis certainly a matter of the highest matter of the utmost importance, and must be

est Importance, and what ought by all lawful means to be secured and maintained.

But then I must condemn all degrees of external Force and Persecution, as a very unfit and unjustifiable means of securing Unity, and guarding against Schism. The Church is allow'd to make use of no Weapons but the Sword of the Spirit, and of this I think I have said enough in a Sermon formerly preached on this Occasion, and afterwards published, to which I refer you.

What I would here remark as more suitable to my present Design is, that those who make the loudest a-do about the Unity of the Church, and clamour most against Schism, are, tis to be fear'd, ignorant of the true Nature of either; and perhaps are themselves most guilty of causing those very Wounds in the Body of Christ, which they complain of, and condemn others for. The Church of Rome condemns all Protestants as Schismatics for renouncing her Communion, when alas by her Innovations and Impositions she has render'd such a Separation necessary and unavoidable. And in such a Case not those that separate, but those that cause the Separation are Schismatics.

But as for the Distinctions amongst Protestants, the Church of Rome has no Reason to represent these as Schisms in our own Body, nor ought the several Denominations of Protestants to represent each other as Schismatical, purely on account of the things whereby they are distinguished; forasmuch as their Differences are not in their own Nature inconsistent with the Unity of the Catholick Body. And on the other hand, any Schisms that may arise from them are not caused by the things themselves, but by the ill Conduct and uncharitable Behaviour of those that pretend to be

* *Christian Compulsion not Persecution.*
the
other

the most zealous Friends of the Church. These Men make Ecclesiastical Unity to consist in things that do not at all affect it, and overlook the great and important things wherein it really consists. And thus they are brought, by their imprudent and blind Zeal, to destroy the Unity which they so warmly contend for.

If all Parties would be as they should be, the Unity of the Church might be preserved inviolable amidst all our Distinctions. For it may be truly said to Protestants of all Denominations, ye are one in Christ Jesus, *i. e.* consider'd as Christians, and Christian Churches.

The principal Controversy amongst Christians in the Apostolical Age, at least in the Churches of *Galatia*, which consisted of a mixture of Jewish and Gentile Converts, was, whether Circumcision and other Rites of the Mosaick Dispensation ought to be submitted to by all Proselytes to the Christian Faith, in order to their admission into the Fellowship of the Gospel Church. The Jewish Converts maintain'd the affirmative, and went so far as to assert, that Men could not be saved without the observation of those Rites and Ceremonies. Whilst, on the other hand, the Gentile Converts rejected these things, with equal Warmth and Uncharitableness, and press'd upon the Jews the necessity of becoming uncircumcised as much as possible, in order to obtain the salutary Effects of Christ's Death and Mediation. Now *St. Paul* endeavours to moderate the Dispute, which ran so high as to endanger the Unity and Peace of the Church, by teaching them that they had no reason to quarrel with, or triumph over one another, on account of any of their external Differences or Distinctions, because Faith in Christ, and Subjection to his Authority, were the only Conditions of Membership in his Church, and all other

other Considerations which affected not those grand Qualifications signified nothing at all. He lets them know, that whether they had been call'd from among the Jews in Circumcision, or whether they had been brought over from among the Gentiles, and consequently in Uncircumcision, it matter'd nothing; since Christians, as such, had a right to the Communion of the Christian Church, and their common Faith united them all together in one intire Body: That *Jews and Greeks, Slaves and Free-men, Males and Females*, were all one in Christ Jesus, *i. e.* in virtue of their common Faith which constituted them Christians.

And however the Controversies now subsisting amongst Christians, are not the same that troubled the Apostolical Church, yet the sense and purport of what our Apostle says to the Churches of *Galatia*, may in reason be apply'd to all the Denominations of Protestants in our Day, *viz.* that amidst all their Differences and Distinctions, they are one in Christ Jesus. So that the Subject I have chosen for the present Discourse, naturally leads me to do these two Things.

I. To take a View of the Things whereby Christian Churches are distinguished from each other, and to shew that the Unity of the Catholick Church ought not to be made to consist in them. And,

II. To shew you wherein the Unity of the Catholick Church does really consist, and to demonstrate that the things wherein Christians and Christian Churches differ, are not at all inconsistent with it; and consequently, that amidst all their Differences, they are, or may be, one in Christ Jesus.

I. I am to take a view of the things whereby Christian Churches are distinguished from each other, and to prove that the Unity of the Church ought not to be made to consist in them. And tho' these Differences are grown pretty numerous, yet they may all be reduced to these two Heads.

1. Different Determinations of Matters which being in their own Nature purely indifferent, are left to human Choice and Prescription.

2. Different Opinions concerning the Sense of some Texts of Scripture.

1. Most of our Disputes are about matters of pure Indifference, or things which being in their own Nature neither Good nor Evil, Christ the supreme Head of the Church has not thought fit authoritatively to determine, but has left to human Choice and Prescription. They are not stiled indifferent, because they need not to be determined, for there is a necessity of determining them. But having nothing of moral Good or Evil in their own Nature, and not being fixed and settled by any divine Prescription, they are called indifferent things, because Mankind have the Power of settling them as they please.

What St. Paul says of Meats offer'd to Idols, 1 Cor. viii. 8. *Meat commendeth us not to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse*, the same may be said of all other matters of indifference. These things do not commend us to God, nor make us a whit the more or less acceptable to him. For neither if we determine this way or that, are we in his esteem the better or the worse.

But now the Controversy amongst Protestants is this. Since these things are left to human Choice, and are necessary to be determined one way

way or another, whose Right it is to determine them. And the resolution of this Question, depends upon the resolution of another, *viz.* who are immediately affected by such Determinations? For 'tis notorious that those that are immediately affected by them, have a natural Right to determine them. Those things that concern myself and none else, I have a natural Right in all Cases to choose and settle for myself. 'Tis a matter, I'll suppose, that affects myself and none besides, whether I walk out or stay at home to Day, and therefore I ought in this Case to be left to my own Choice; and should any Man, or body of Men oblige me to one or the other against my own Consent, I am deprived of my natural Right, and have reason to complain of Imposition. But on the other hand, any indifferent matters that in their Nature affect Society, the Society affected by them have a Right to determine, as far as they only relate to, and concern themselves.

And this is the true State of the Case with relation to indifferent things, about which Christians and Christian Churches differ in their Choice and Determination. Some of these things concern only particular Persons, and do not in themselves affect Society, and others immediately and in their own Nature affect the Church, consider'd in a congregate and social State. Now those indifferent things that concern only Individuals, and not Society as such, ought to be left intirely to the free Choice of every particular Person. For instance, 'tis a matter of pure indifference whether the Sacrament be received standing, sitting, or kneeling, or whether Persons turn to the East or not at the Name of Jesus. But these matters in their own Nature only concern particular Persons, and do not affect Christian Society as such. The Sacrament may

be received, and the publick Prayers offered up and join'd in, by all the Congregation, as well without, as with Uniformity in such things. And therefore the Church should not intermeddle in these matters, but should leave every one of her Members to his own Choice. For by the same Rule that one indifferent thing of a pure personal Concern is prescribed by the Church, and imposed on her Members, a hundred more may; till at last, the Communion shall be clogg'd and incumber'd with such Terms, as will be grievous and intolerable to the wisest and best part of Mankind. Impositions of this sort, if once admitted, will be apt to grow and spread like a Land-Flood, and overwhelm the Church with Discord and Confusion. If the Gestures and Postures of particular Persons may be settled by the Church, why not particular Habits too? She may as well decree that none shall be admitted to her Communion that wear Perriwigs, or Hoop-petticoats; she may as well injoin Whiskers on all her Male Members, and so on, for there is no stopping. She is as much affected with one thing as another of such personal matters, and may with as much reason prescribe in one Case as another. And from hence it appears, that to require a Uniformity in any such matters, is a manifest infringement of the natural Rights and Privileges of the People.

But then there are some indifferent things, which immediately, and in their own Nature, affect and concern not only particular Persons, but the Church too, consider'd as a collective Body, and these should be settled and determined by the Society which they affect and concern. As things of a pure personal Concern should be left to the election of Individuals, so things that concern particular Societies, and none else, should

should be settled by such Societies for themselves. And such Settlements and Determinations are binding, if regularly made, on every individual Member, of which such Societies are respectively made up, and on none besides. One Church has no more right to prescribe in these matters for another, than one Man has to prescribe for another in personal matters, that is just none at all. And hence it follows, by necessary and unavoidable Consequence, that a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand Churches, consider'd in a state of Combination, have no power to prescribe to any other Church, or Churches. For the power of the whole Body in this combined State, must result only from the power lodged in the particular Societies of which it consists. Now as no particular Church in the Combination, has any right to prescribe to another Society, so neither has the whole Combination any such right, over any one Congregation that does not belong to it. These Churches in their combined State, may, if they please, by mutual Consent, prescribe a Uniformity in indifferent things for themselves, but their Decrees are not at all binding on any out of the Combination. Or if ever so many Congregations should agree together, to submit to the prescription of the Civil Magistrate, in matters of indifference; such a voluntary surrender of their natural Right, gives the Civil Magistrate a Power perhaps to prescribe in such matters, to those Churches that join'd in the surrender, but to none else. The power of determining indifferent things relating to the Church, consider'd in a social State, is lodged originally and immediately in every particular Society, *viz.* a power to determine for itself, in matters of indifference that concern itself, and no other So-

cieties. This methinks is a self-evident Truth, and needs only to be set in a just Light, to gain our assent to it. Such Decrees immediately affect particular Societies, they are the best judges of what is fittest and most proper for themselves; they know best what will suit their own Temper, and Circumstances, and consequently what will be most for their own Satisfaction and Comfort; they are to reap the Advantages, or suffer the Damage, that will ensue upon any Decrees of this kind; and their Liberty of Choice can, in its own Nature, only affect themselves. And therefore we may conclude, that God and Nature have lodged this Power in every Church, and that no Power on Earth can hinder the execution of it without manifest Injustice; unless, on other accounts, a Forfeiture be made of it. Amongst those indifferent things that affect and concern the Church in her congregate and social State, are these that follow.

The Circumstance of Place, where the Church shall stately assemble. For tho according to our Saviour's words, *John* iv. 21. one place is now under the Gospel Dispensation as acceptable to God as another, yet 'tis highly necessary, that some one particular place should be agreed upon by the Church, and appointed for the publick Service of God, that so all its Members may know whither to repair on such Occasions. And for the same Reason 'tis necessary also, that the particular time of assembling should be some way or other settled, that every one may know when to go to the publick Worship, and when to enjoy the Ordinances of the House of God.

Moreover, 'tis necessary to the Order and Well-being of the Church, that the Mode of publick Worship should be settled in every Church,
Christ

Christ has left full and sufficient Instructions, concerning the Nature and Essence of the Worship to be perform'd by his Church, but he has not thought fit to settle the Mode of it. This he has left to the Discretion and Choice of the Church, it being in itself a matter of pure indifference, and making no alteration in the Nature of the Worship itself. What is of the Essence of Christian Worship; and all that is necessary to render it acceptable to God, is, that it be directed to him, in the Name and thro' the Mediation of Jesus Christ, with a true and sincere Heart. And such Confessions, Prayers, and Praises are the same, whether they are from time to time offer'd up in a set prescribed Form of Words, or with more Liberty and variety of Expression. And yet 'tis at least convenient, that some particular mode should be settled in every Congregation.

Furthermore, 'tis a matter of pure indifference in itself, how the several parts of the publick Service are ranged and methodised; whether the Church begins with reading, singing, praying, or preaching, &c. And yet 'tis very proper, that this Arrangement and Order of the several parts of publick Service should be settled in every Congregation, that the People may know beforehand how they must proceed. And the Hurry and Confusion the Assembly seems to be thrown into, when by mistake, or otherwise, any part of the Service is enter'd upon, out of its usual place, is a sufficient proof of the expediency of such a Settlement of Order and Method. 'Tis indifferent whether the Eucharist be administer'd in the Morning or Afternoon, whether before or after Sermon; and yet 'tis expedient, that this indifferent Circumstance should be determined in every Church, it being a matter that concerns the whole Society.

I add, that the particular Modes of Church-Government, are, in my Opinion, a matter of indifference, left to the Choice and Decision of particular Christian Societies, whom, as such, it immediately concerns. There have indeed been warm Disputes kept up for many Ages, concerning the Government of the Church, and each of the contending Parties have been wont to appeal to the Scriptures, to prove their respective Model to be *Jure Divino*. Some contend, that Bishops, Priests and Deacons, are the three Orders that Christ ordain'd, and his Apostles establish'd in the Church. Others, that particular Societies ought to be in subjection to a Presbytery within a certain District; but allowing an Appeal to a provincial, or national Synod: that Bishops and Presbyters are, according to the Apostolical Institution, one and the same Order, and that a Diocesan Bishop is a mere Creature of the Civil Magistrate. Others warmly assert, that every Congregation is intirely independent on all others, and is to be under the care and oversight of a Pastor of its own choosing; whose Authority is so far confined to the Congregation that chooses him, that he has no Power *ex officio* in any other Church. Each of these contending Parties, I say, plead a *Jus Divinum*, for their different Plans of Ecclesiastical Policy. But alas, in my opinion, these Disputes are vain and frivolous. For Christ the supreme Head of the Church has left no standing Rules concerning the Mode of Church Polity, besides this general one, that *all things be done to Edification*. Some Government, and consequently some Officers there must be, or else the Affairs of the Church would be neglected and run into Confusion, but the particular Model, is, for ought I can find, left to the choice and determination of the Church.

We have an account indeed of a great variety of Church-Officers, in the Apostles time, such as Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, Rulers, Exhorters, Bishops, Presbyters, and many more. And they were appointed, as St. Paul informs us, for the profit of the Church, and the edification of the Body of Christ, *Eph. iv. 12.* But then they were appointed *pro hac vice*, the Circumstances of the Church requiring such a variety at that time. Nor can it be imagined that all these Orders were to be found in every Congregation, but some in one, and some in another, according as their Circumstances and Necessities differed. And as soon as the Church grew up from infant-Weakness, to a more confirmed and settled State, most of these Offices ceas'd, being no longer necessary; and we can now only guess at the meaning of them. Now from hence 'tis plain, that necessity, and the advantage of the Church, is the only end of ordaining Officers and Governours; and therefore that these are to be subjected to such Changes and Variations, as the Circumstances of the Church in different Places, and Times, shall require.

In a word, it seems evident to me, that the Apostles never designed to fix a standing Model of Polity for the Church, in future Ages. What they settled at one time they alter'd at another, laid aside some, and set up new Officers, according to the Changes in the state of the Church; and this Liberty which they took to alter their own Model, is a plain Indication, that they had no thought of prescribing to us an exact Form of Government. Nay, their Conduct, methinks, speaks the very thing that I am contending for, *viz.* that the Churches in succeeding Ages, even to the end of the World, should, as they did,

consult

consult their own Profit and Edification, and settle such Schemes of Polity, as they should judge proper for that purpose. Besides, we do not find throughout the whole New Testament, the least hint, that the Apostles intended to exhibit a perpetual Plan of Government, or that they expected the Churches in after-times should conform to any one of their Models, which were all calculated to suit the State of the Church in their own Times.

This therefore is a matter, I humbly conceive, left to the discretion of the Churches, who are best acquainted with their own Condition, and the Circumstances of their own Times. Some Government there must be, and God who is not the Author of Confusion, but of Order, and who requires a decent Regulation of the publick Service, expects it. But as the particular Modes of Civil Government are left to be settled by particular Nations and Societies, suitable to their respective Interests and Circumstances, so particular Modes of Church Government, are as much left to the Wisdom and Prudence of the Church to determine, according as may be most for her Edification and Advantage. Nor can what I have here advanced tend to weaken the force of Church-Government, or lessen the Authority of her Governours, if it be consider'd, that as there is a divine Right, imprest upon Ecclesiastical Government in general, so the proper Officers in every Model of Government are as much invested with this divine Right, as if that particular Model had been instituted of God, and no other. And the general Ordinance of God being thus derived upon, and applied to every Species of Government, it may justly be said, in the words of St. Paul, *There is no power but of God;*

God: the powers that be, are ordained of God; whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God, and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation. Rom. xiii. 1, 2. Theſe, I think, are the principal matters of indifference, which as they immediately, and in their own Nature, affect and concern particular Chriſtian Societies, are left to their own Choice and Deciſion. 'Tis convenient that every Congregation ſhould have a ſettled place to meet in, and a ſet time for aſſembling together, a ſtated Mode of Worſhip, a fixed Method in the Arrangement of the ſeveral parts of publick Service, and a ſettled Model of Government. But theſe matters in themſelves affect only the Societies in which they are ſettled, and therefore ſhould be left to their own Determinations, and ſubjected only to ſuch Alterations as they ſhall judge from time to time neceſſary, or expedient. And hence it follows, that Chriſtian Churches have no reaſon to be diſpleaſed with each other for their different Choice and Determinations in ſuch Things: If they don't agree to worſhip God thro' Chriſt in the ſame place, nor at one and the ſame time, nor in exactly the ſame Mode and Order, and finally if they can't agree upon the very ſame Model of Government; ſuch Differences ſhould not diſpleaſe, forasmuch as they are only about things indifferent, left to the free Choice of every Society, who cannot juſtly be diſpoſſeſt of this Power, without their own free Conſent and Surrender, or unleſs by their Abufe of it, they forfeit it.

If therefore one Church has made a wiſer and more prudent Choice than another, they ought not, however, to deſpiſe or hate their Brethren, who, if they have been guilty of Imprudence and Indiscretion, themſelves ſuffer the Damage and Inconveniencies, and are therefore rather the Ob-
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jects of Pity than Resentment. And it ought to be consider'd too, by those that thus compliment their own Understanding, and magnify the Wisdom of their own Decrees, that however agreeable their own Determination is to themselves, it would be altogether as disagreeable to their Neighbours, who are most pleased and profited with their own Schemes, how weak and ill-concerted soever they may seem to others.

Having thus taken a survey of the Differences amongst Protestants about matters in their own Nature indifferent, which are left to human Choice, I shall proceed to demonstrate that the Unity of the Church does not consist in them, nor is affected by them, consider'd in themselves.

It cannot possibly consist in Unity of place, now that the Religion of Jesus is become the Religion of whole Nations, and the Number of Christians in populous Towns and Cities, is grown so great, that they cannot possibly assemble all together to worship God. They must of necessity now meet in separate Bodys, in distinct places for convenience of Worship. The first Christian Church indeed, and the only one then in the World, were together daily in the Temple; but the Unity of place lasted but a short time, for *so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed*, that the Church soon extended it self over most parts of the then known World, which obliged the Believers to assemble in separate Bodies. And having in many places, no publick Edifice to repair to, and being moreover greatly persecuted for their Religion, they were often obliged to meet in small Numbers in private Houses. Which Conventicles, however now a term of Reproach, were called Churches, for St. Paul more than once speaks of the Church in such a one's House. So that Unity of place, has

has been for many Ages incompatible to the State of the Church, and therefore cannot be necessary to the Unity asserted in our Text.

Nor will any, sure, say that Unity of time for publick Worship is a part of the Unity of the Catholick Church, when every particular Society claims a right to assemble at what Hour suits them best.

Nor can the Unity of the Catholick Church be made to consist in Uniformity as to the Mode of Worship, the order of the parts of publick Service, or the Model of Ecclesiastical Government. And, for the Truth of this, I appeal to the most zealous Sticklers for Uniformity in such matters. The best and most able Defenders of the established Church of *England* allow, that if one National Church adheres to a stinted Liturgy, and another to extemporary Prayer, one to an Episcopal, and another to a Presbyterian Government, &c. yet that these Differences do not destroy the Unity of the Catholick Church, as long as there is a free Communication kept open between the Worship and Communion of one and the other.

Now if different Modes of Worship, and different Plans of Church Government, in two or more National Churches, do not destroy their Unity, nor constitute a Schism between them, it follows, that the Unity of the Catholick Church does not consist in these things; for if it consists in them, there must of necessity be a Schism created between two National Churches, which differ in these Points, which it seems will not be allow'd. And if the Unity of several National Churches, does not consist in a Uniformity in such matters as I have just mentioned, I cannot conceive how such a Uniformity can be proved to be necessary to the Unity of the Church in one

the same Nation. If different Modes of Worship and Government in different Nations are consistent with the Unity of these Churches, 'tis evident that these things do not constitute the Unity of the Church. And if they do not constitute the Unity of the Church, then 'tis possible that Unity may subsist where there is not a Uniformity in them. And if Unity may subsist in the Nature of things where this Uniformity is not, then the Unity of one and the same National Church, may be maintained without it. So that every particular Society may, pursuant to their natural Right, choose for themselves in these indifferent matters, without incurring the guilt of Schism, as much as a whole national Church may, consistent with Unity, choose and settle for itself, a different Mode of Worship and Polity from that of another National Church.

I add, that as the Unity of the Church does not consist in the Sameness of her Determinations in things of Indifference, so neither is the Honour of the Church, nor Credit of Religion at all injured by any difference in these matters consider'd in themselves. The Christian Religion is the same in all Churches, how widely soever they may differ in these Points. Indeed it must be confess'd, that Controversies about indifferent things have proved the occasions of great Mischief to Religion and the Church, but this has been owing intirely to the unreasonable and assuming Temper of the Managers of them, who can't be content on one side and another, quietly to enjoy their own Choice, but must impose upon one another, and be angry with all that determine differently from themselves. These things are in their own Nature harmless and innocent, have no pernicious Tendency, and would all
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Sides give the same Liberty of Choice as they are willing to take, the Honour of the Church, and the Credit of Religion, would subsist inviolable and unhurt amidst all such different Modes and Circumstances.

So that upon the whole it appears, that all denominations of Protestants may assert their right of determining for themselves in all matters of indifference, and of enjoying their own respective Choice, without being chargeable, purely on that account, with injuring the Credit of Religion, violating the Unity of the Church, or creating a Schism in the mystical body of Christ.

But if, after all, our Differences of this kind are found in their Consequences to be prejudicial to Religion, and the Peace of the Church; this is a quite different Consideration. And how far in such a Case we are bound to recede from our Right, is a Question that equally concerns all Parties.

I am next to consider matters of Opinion, or different Interpretations of some Texts of Scripture. There are some things in the Christian System, which how clear and indisputable soever they might be in the Apostolical Age, yet in after-times became so obscure and doubtful, that good honest Christians who sincerely desir'd, and endeavour'd to know, and do the will of their Lord and Master, differ'd in their Opinions concerning them, and could not, after an impartial Search, be of one Mind and Judgment. They all seem'd to pay an equal regard to the Authority of the Scriptures, appealed to them for a Decision of their Disputes, and seem'd willing under the Guidance of them to be led into all Truth, as it is in Jesus. So it has been in all Ages since the Apostles, and so it is at this Day. After all
their

their Inquiries Christians cannot think alike: The Sense of such and such Texts of Scripture seems to some different from the Interpretations which others put upon them.

Now the subject of our present Inquiry is, whether the Unity of the Church requires Unity of Opinion in all its Members? or, in other words, whether a profession of different Opinions is destructive of the Unity of the Church? That they have occasioned Discords, Confusions and Schisms, is too plain to be deny'd. But whether these bad and pernicious Consequences are to be ascribed to the Spirit and Conduct of Men of different Persuasions, or whether they result as necessary Effects from the Nature of these different Sentiments, is the Question to be resolved. Bigots and opinionated Persons of all Persuasions will roundly assert the latter, viz. that the Opinions that differ from their own are destructive of the Peace and Unity of the Church, and consequently, that they are justify'd in setting up an Interest opposite and contrary to that of their Neighbours; which constitutes a formal Schism in the Church, the guilt of which they are apt in great Modesty to place to the Account of those, who profess to differ from them in Sentiment and Opinion.

But any one that thinks soberly and impartially of the Nature and State of our Differences of this kind, must needs be convinced, that the Unity of the Church is not affected by them, consider'd in themselves; that this Unity cannot possibly consist in Identity of Opinion, and consequently that the unhappy Rents and Schisms, that have from time to time been made in the Church on these Accounts, have been intirely owing to the bad Spirit and Conduct of Men of different Persuasions.

For

For how can different Opinions in themselves affect the Unity of the Church, when they are perfectly consistent with Unity of Faith? By Faith I mean, a sincere Belief that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, and in Consequence of this Belief, a real Desire and Endeavour to know and do his Will, as contained in the Scriptures. This Faith is absolutely necessary to constitute a Christian, and to render him capable of joining in the publick Service of the Church. This Faith runs thro' the whole Church, and in several respects renders it one intire Body. Whoever has not this Faith, is incapable, in his State of Infidelity, of being a real Member of the Christian Church; and on the other Hand, whoever is possess'd of it, as he is qualified for Christian Communion, so he may demand it of any part of the Church upon such a Declaration. And that with a *non obstante* to his peculiar and distinctive Opinions, in any matters consistent with it. Now that the different Opinions amongst Protestants are consistent with this common Faith that constitutes them Christians, is very evident, because all contending Parties have recourse to the Scripture for the Truth of their respective Tenets, and declare themselves willing to be guided and determined by the word and will of Christ. So that their very Disputes are a Declaration of their Faith in Christ, and Subjection to him. Their pleading the Mind and Will of Christ in favour of their several Opinions, is a Proof that they believe him to be the Christ, and their constant Appeal to the Scripture, bespeaks them to believe it to be the Rule of Faith and Manners, and proves them to be willing to be directed by it.

Now as our different Opinions do not obstruct the Unity of our common Faith, nor make us

ever

ever the more or less Christians; how can they in themselves injure or destroy the Unity of the Church? Faith renders the Church one, as much as Rationality in human Body renders all Mankind one Species of Being. And all matters of Opinion are as consistent with this Faith, and consequently with Unity, as different Features and Shapes in human Body are consistent with the sameness of the human Species.

Besides, these different Opinions are only of a personal Concern, and do not in themselves affect Society. The common Faith of Christians, is not only of personal, but social Concern, forasmuch as it enters into the Nature and Essence of the publick Worship, which none but Believers in Christ can join in. The Prayers and Praises of the Church are offer'd up in the Name of Christ, and are founded upon the Authority of the Scriptures, and therefore without Faith, no Man can possibly be qualified for the Worship or Communion of the Christian Church. But whoever has Faith, has every thing necessary to render him meet and worthy to be admitted to all the Privileges of the House of God. His Opinions in matters of Controversy, are no hindrance to his joining heartily in the Worship and Communion of the Church. Nay, Persons of the most opposite Sentiments in such matters, may unite as well in all the proper Business of the Church, as if they were all of the same Opinion and Judgment. They can all sincerely confess their Sins, pray for Pardon and all good things, offer up their Thanksgivings and Praises to God, in the Name of Jesus Christ; they can all eat and drink in Commemoration of the Sufferings and Death of their common Saviour at his Table. These, and all other things which properly belong to the

the Service of the Church, all Christians can unite in, amidst the variety of Opinions by which they are distinguished and denominated. I shall instance only in two things, one of which distinguishes Christians of our Denomination into two Bodies; and the other distinguishes us from other Denominations.

The Controversy which divides us into two Bodies, is that concerning the quinquarticular Points, or what is commonly call'd Calvinism and Arminianism. Now these are matters of a purely personal Concern, and do not affect the Church as such; at least they ought not. For no Points of Controversy amongst Christians should be drawn into its publick Worship, which should consist of nothing but what all Christians are actually agreed in. And were the Worship of the Church thus restored to its due Purity and Simplicity, this Controversy would be found to be a matter merely of a personal Concern. And the Church being not at all affected by it, has nothing to do to make any Decrees about it, but should leave it to the decision of every Man's private Judgment, whose unalienable Right it is to settle his own Opinions. No human Creeds or Prescriptions should hinder his free and impartial Inquiry after Truth. And for this Reason, viz. that 'tis a matter of a mere personal Concern, and does not in it self affect the Church, the Unity of the Church cannot consist in it. For how can this Unity be supposed to depend upon a Point, which the Church, in a social Capacity, has nothing to do with, and about which, it being left to the decision of every Man's own Judgment, Believers in Christ will unavoidably differ in their Sentiments.

The other thing that I think it proper to mention is the Case of Baptism, by which the Baptists are distinguished from the rest of the Christian Church. You believe that none ought to be baptized but upon a personal Profession of their Faith: other Denominations profess to believe that Infants should be admitted to Baptism, either upon the Faith of their Parents or Sureties, (not to mention the Mode of Baptism, which is now become a Difference rather in Practice than Opinion.) Now this Controversy concerning the subjects of Baptism, is a personal Case, which does not concern the Church in a social State. And therefore every Man should be left to act in this Point, according to the Persuasion of his own Mind. And as in Consequence of such a Liberty, the Christian World will be divided in Practice as well as Opinion, the Unity of the Church ought by no means to be made to depend upon either side of the Question. Neither the Worship nor Communion of the Church requires Unity of Opinion or Practice, in the Point of Baptism. For whether Persons have been baptized in Infancy, or at riper Years, 'tis a matter that only concerns themselves; for if they have Faith, they can join in the Confessions, Supplications, Thanksgivings, and Praises, of the Church, and can receive the Symbols of their Saviour's Body and Blood: all this they can join in as one Man, as heartily and sincerely, as if both their Opinion and Practice, as to Baptism, had been exactly the same. And if this be the Case, the Controversy about Baptism, has in its own Nature no relation to the Unity of the Church, which can't depend on things that solely concern Individuals, and not Christian Society as such.

Moreover, that the Unity of the Church, which all Christians are strictly required to regard, and maintain, cannot consist in Unity of Opinion, appears from hence, that to place it on this Foot, would be to render an important Duty utterly impracticable. Nothing is, in the New Testament, enjoined with more Solemnity, and enforced with more awful Sanctions, than the Unity of the Church: Nor is any thing more severely censur'd and condemn'd than Schism. And the least that can be collected from this State of the Case is, that 'tis possible for good Men to maintain Catholick Unity, and prevent Schism, in a way consistent with their Allegiance and Subjection to Christ in all other Respects. For 'tis too shocking a thing to suppose, that the Author of our Holy Religion should be so Inconsistent with himself, and so barbarous to his most faithful Servants, as to require, under the severest Penalties, a thing which cannot be performed, but at the expence of a good Conscience, and their Allegiance to him in other Instances, equally necessary and indispensible. And yet to make the Unity of the Church to consist in Unity of Opinion, will unavoidably plunge us into this Absurdity. For to set up any one sett of Articles in matters of Controversy, as the Standard of Truth, and the necessary Laws of Unity, must unavoidably tear and divide the Church into opposite Parties and Communities, which is contrary to it. Good Men, and good Christians, would, in such a Case, be forced upon this fatal Dilemma, either to break the Unity of the Church, which carries Guilt with it, or make Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, in order to preserve it.

To instance only in the Point of Baptism, concerning the Subjects of which Christians are di-

vided in their Opinions. Should either side of the Question be set up by the Church as essential to its Unity, all of the other Side, would be necessitated either to sacrifice Conscience for its Sake, or else to set up for themselves, which is supposed to be inconsistent with it. Suppose, for Example, the Pedobaptists, being by far the greatest Body, and having the Favour and Authority of the Civil Magistrate on their Side, should require all to bring their Infants to Baptism, on pain of Excommunication and publick Censure; and suppose this Ecclesiastical Canon should be enforced by a penal Law, which exposes the disobedient to expensive and ruinous Prosecutions, to Confiscation of Goods, Imprisonment, &c. why in such a Case the Antipedobaptists to a Man are laid under a necessity, either intirely to neglect Church Fellowship, or in defiance of the Authority of Christ, to act against Conscience, in bringing their Infants to Baptism, or to set up a publick Service of their own. The two former cannot be chosen without Guilt; and as for the last, *viz.* setting up for themselves, it may possibly occasion a Schism in the Church, but the Guilt of this Schism is to be placed to their Account, who necessitated the Breach, by insisting on Unity of Opinion, as necessary to the Unity of the Church. The Antipedobaptists are in such a Case certainly justifiable, and clear from the Guilt of Schism, unless they also in their turn set up their own Opinion and Practice as an indispensable Condition of Unity, by obliging all to conform thereto, in order to be admitted into their Communion.

So that upon the whole, 'tis very evident that the Unity of the Church does not consist in Unity of Opinion: different Opinions are intirely consistent

consistent with the common Faith of Christians; they are of a pure personal Concern, and they are of such a Nature, that should any one Set of them be established in the Church, as the conditions of Unity and the Terms of Communion, numbers of sincere Christians would find it impossible to preserve the Church's Unity, without sinning against Light and Conscience.

This Unity is a matter of common concern; and all Christians of what Persuasion soever are bound upon the penalty of Damnation, carefully to consult and preserve it, and therefore nothing can be more evident than that it does not require Unity of Opinion, which in the present State of things is impossible, but consists only in such things as 'tis in the power of Christians, as such, amidst all their Differences, to comply with and submit to. And this leads me to what I proposed to do in the Second place, viz. to show,

II. Wherein the Unity of the Christian Church does really consist, and to demonstrate, that none of the differences amongst Protestants, either about matters of Indifference or of Opinion are in their own Nature inconsistent with, or destructive of it. And here 'tis necessary to remark that there is a twofold Unity of the Church mentioned in the Holy Scripture.

The first I call an intrinsick and essential Unity, because the Christian Church, as such, is necessarily possess'd of it, and cannot subsist without it. There are certain Principles of Union which are of the essence and constitution of the Church, which it cannot be deprived of without ceasing to exist, which all its Parts and Branches partake of, and which taken together, constitute a specifick difference between it and all other kinds

kinds of Societys. Just as there are certain Principles of Identity, inseparably inherent in the human Species, equally predicable of every Individual under it, and which establish an essential difference between that and all other kinds of Beings.

And from this intrinsic and essential Unity of the Church, there flows a certain Unity, which I call a secondary and relative Unity, because it results from it as a necessary and indispensable Duty. Accordingly I shall,

1. Shew wherein the intrinsic and essential Unity of the Church consists, and demonstrate that the distinctions amongst Protestants are not inconsistent with, or destructive of it.

2. Wherein the secondary and relative Unity of the Church consists, which is in holy writ enjoined upon her, as her indispensable Duty. I design'd at first to have been pretty large on each of these heads, but having dwelt so long on the foregoing particulars, must be forced to contract what follows into a narrow compass. Perhaps another time, I may treat this Subject more largely.

I am to shew wherein the intrinsic and essential Unity of the Church consists, and to demonstrate that the distinctions amongst Protestants, are not inconsistent with, or destructive of it.

And here in the first place, it may be safely asserted, that all Christian Churches are made up of Persons, whose qualifications and spiritual Interests are the same. For of all the real Members of the holy Catholick Church it may be said, that they are good Men, and good Christians, and that they possess and are intitled to all the Immunities and Privileges of the Gospel Covenant.

Covenant. Were they all met together in one general Rendezvous, they would be found to unite as one Man, in a sincere desire to know and do the will of God, in their belief that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, and a willingness to be taught, govern'd, and saved by him. They would be all found, in proportion to the measure of their attainments in Christian Perfection, and according to their several relations and circumstances, disposed to practise the same dutys of the Christian Life, to worship the same God, thro' the same Mediator, to cultivate the same moral Virtues, and to shun the same moral Evils. They would be all found to be sanctified and influenc'd by the same Holy Spirit, to be justified by the Grace of God, thro' the Redemption of Christ Jesus, and to be united in one common Hope of their Calling. Thus would they be found to be all one in Christ Jesus.

And is there any thing in the Distinctions that subsist amongst them, repugnant to this Unity? Can their different Determinations in matters of Indifference, or their different Sentiments in matters of Opinion, violate or destroy the Identity of their Qualifications or their Hope? May they not all sincerely love God, and serve him thro' Christ; deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, exhibit themselves bright Patterns of Virtue and moral Rectitude, and, in consequence of these things, may they not all be favourites of God, and Heirs of Salvation, notwithstanding the little Differences and Distinctions that are between them? Nothing is more certain.

And if so, good God! Why should the several denominations of the Christian Chorch, bite and devour one another? Can true Christians be guilty of such unnatural Barbarity? no, 'tis contrary

trary to the Spirit by which they are led, and to the Religion they profess. An Enemy therefore hath done this; For as the things that I have mentioned are a solid foundation of Unity amongst all good Christians, so their forming themselves into distinct Societys, tho different in Modes and Ceremonys, and such like lesser matters, lays them under no necessity of breaking thro' the Obligation of St. Paul's Injunction, who exhorted the Christians at *Ephesus*, and in them all Christians throughout the World, to *preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, Eph. 4. 3. On the contrary, as the intrinsick Unity amongst all the members of the Christian Church, is very substantial, and important, so when they are consider'd in a Social or Church State, they are one, not only in their personal Qualifications and Interests which they still retain, but also in every thing necessary to constitute a Christian Church.

They all profess, consider'd in a social State, Subjection to Christ, as their common Ecclesiastical Head and Governour, they acknowledg themselves to be obliged by the same body of Laws, and to be under the same Charter, by which their Business, and their Privileges, as Christian Churches, are markt out, and assigned them. Their publick Worship and Service is the same in kind, and not essentially different, for they worship the same God, thro' the same Mediator; they all pray for the same Things, give thanks for the same Mercys, their Confessions and Praises are the same: And the modal and circumstantial Differences in their Worship, make no more alteration in the Nature and Essence of it, than different Dresses make in the same Man. Some perhaps may like him best in one Dress, and some in another,

another, but the Man is the same, in all his different Habits. In like manner, as to the publick Service of the Church, some like it best in one Dress, and some in another; some choose to pray to God, and praise him in a stinted Form of Words, others with greater Liberty and Freedom of Expression, but the Worship itself is the same, and suffers no Change, tho the Drapery and Garb in which it appears in the several Churches is somewhat different. The same may be said of the Lord's Supper. For however one Church receives the Symbols of their Saviour's Sufferings and Death, in a different Posture, and with different Ceremony, from another, yet as the Symbols are the same, and received in obedience to the Institution of Christ, to the same End, *viz.* in Commemoration of a crucified Saviour; it may be truly said of them, that notwithstanding such external Differences, they partake of the same common Altar, and that *tho many they are but one Body, and one Bread, for they are all Partakers of that one Bread.* 1 Cor 10. 17. To conclude this Head, Protestants of all Denominations are one in the Nature and Ends of their Ecclesiastical Polity and Government. For however they may differ about the Precedency, Subordination, Number, and Names of Church Officers, still their Government is, I say, in the general nature and ends of it, the same. Officers are chosen, by whatever Names they are called, to one and the same Work, *viz.* to preach the Gospel, to read the Scriptures, to guide and go before the People in their Social Worship, to administer the Sacraments, to preside in the Discipline of the Church, to take care of the Poor, to see that all things be done decently and in order; and, in a word, like faithful Stewards, to consult the Interest and Safety of the Church, and to take such Methods as may conduce most

to its Profit and Edification. These are the great Ends for which Ecclesiastical Government was ordained, and the things that all Denominations have in View, in settling their respective Modes of Regimen and Discipline. And however one Church thinks Ecclesiastical Government, in such a Form, and in such Hands, will be most profitable and advantageous, and another thinks it best, and most conducive to the great and important Ends of it, to establish it in a Form somewhat different; yet these modal Distinctions, being, as I have shewn, in themselves purely indifferent, make no more alteration, in the nature of the Government itself, than the Government of the Treasury, or Admiralty sustains, by being sometimes in the Hands of a single Person, and sometimes in Commission.

These are the things, which constitute the intrinsic and essential Unity of the Church, and in such respects all Protestant-Churches of all Denominations, are actually one in Christ Jesus, *i. e.* in virtue of their common Faith in him: nor are their Differences, at all inconsistent with it. And if so, then it necessarily follows,

2. That no Differences amongst Protestants, either about matters of Indifference, or of Opinion, are in their own Nature inconsistent with the secondary and relative Unity of the Church, which in the Holy Scriptures is enjoined upon her as a necessary and indispensable Duty, and which can never cease to be a reasonable and practicable Duty, as long as she is one, in the great and momentous matters just now mentioned. Whatever is not destructive of the essential Unity of the Church, can never in it self be inconsistent with its relative Unity. If all Christian Churches are actually one, in the religious Qualifications and Interests of all their real Members, if they are all under profest subjection to Christ, and the authority

authority of his Laws, if they all adhere to, and maintain one common Worship, if they all partake of the same Eucharist, and are under one and the same Polity and Government: If this be the true State of the Case, and such a Unity can, and does actually subsist in the Christian Church, amidst all her Differences and Distinctions, then it follows, that she ought to be one in the following respects, which constitute what I call her secondary and relative Unity.

1. That all her Parts and Members should be of the same mind one towards another, by which I mean that there ought to be a mutual agreement in their Sentiments one of another. 'Tis the Duty of all Denominations of Christians, to esteem each other to be Fellow-Members of the same Body, and nearly and intimately allied. Nor can their Differences in themselves, render this Duty impracticable, forasmuch as it obliges us only to think justly one of another; that is to think each other to be what they really are, amidst all their Distinctions. If the important things that constitute the essential Unity of the Church are predicable of all her Parts, then they are really one Church, however differently denominated; and if they all make up one Holy Catholick Church, then they are certainly Fellow-Members of the universal Body, and nearly related to each other; and if they are really so, 'tis their Duty to think so, nor can the Differences between them render it impossible, for them to think of themselves and one another according to Truth. And such favourable Sentiments, will dispose all Denominations of Protestants for the Practice of another Duty, which is no less necessary to the relative Unity of the Church, and with which, the Distinctions and Differences to be found in her, are not inconsistent; I mean, brotherly Love, or Unity of Heart and affection. This is certainly a very necessary

and important part of the relative Unity of the Christian Church, tho I cannot think it to be the whole of it. And sure upon Supposition, that the several Denominations of the Christian Church are so firmly united in the weighty matters above-mentioned, they have all the reason in the World to love one another, and to express this their brotherly Love, by rejoicing at the Prosperity, and lamenting the Misfortunes of each other. And this brotherly Love and Affection, which like the Blood and Spirits in the human Body, should have a free and unobstructed Circulation throughout Christ's mystical Body the Church, will naturally lead and dispose the several Members of it to another Duty, highly necessary to the Peace and Compactedness of the whole Body, and the Reasonableness and Equity of which evidently result from the intrinsic Unity above described.

I mean that all Denominations of the Christian Church should be united in one common Concern. That every Congregation, by whatever Name 'tis distinguish'd, should regard and consult in the first place the good of the Catholick Church, and its own private Advantage, only in Subordination thereto. And this Duty is expressly recommended by St. Paul, who in 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26. directs the Members of the Church, in order to prevent Schism in the Body to have the same Care one for another; and tells them, that if one Member suffer'd, all the Members should suffer with it, and if one Member were honour'd, all the Members should rejoice with it. Which Duty, as 'tis necessary to be observed and practis'd in every particular Congregation, with regard to its own Unity and Peace, so also is it necessary to be regarded by all the Churches one towards another, in order to maintain Catholick Unity, and prevent those fatal Rents and Schisms, which the contrary Spirit and Conduct tends to

create and maintain. Nor are the Differences amongst Christian Protestants at all inconsistent in their own Nature, with this generous and publick Spirit, which all Christians and all Churches ought to express for the common Interest of Christ in the World. We may, for ought I see, adhere to a particular Denomination, without terminating our Regards on it, and without sacrificing a publick to a private Interest. And if all Parties were under the Influence and Conduct of such Catholick Principles as these, which are so agreeable to the Rules of our Holy Religion, and to the real state of the Catholick Church, she being amidst all her Distinctions one in all the important matters above mentioned; I'm persuaded, none of them would deem it a thing impossible in its own Nature, to reduce to practice another Duty of the last Consequence to the relative Unity and Peace of the Church, which is this, *viz.*

That the several Denominations of the Christian Church should keep open a free Communication between each others Worship and Sacrament. To set up Worship against Worship, and Altar against Altar, or in other words, for the several Denominations of Christians to renounce each others Worship and Communion; this, as it constitutes a formal Schism, so it naturally tends to produce very pernicious Effects; such a Schism being usually attended with, a fond Attachment to a Party, uncharitable Censures, alienation of Affection, selfish Views, and a disregard to the real Interest and Welfare of the common Cause of Christ. 'Tis generally attended with Bickerings and vain Disputes, Animosities, Hatred, Variance, and many other Evils, equally injurious and prejudicial both to Church and State. No wonder then if such a Schism is severely condemn'd by the Apostles, and the Authors of them concluded under a Curse. Nor is it at all surprizing to find the

primitive Fathers thundring out Anathemas and Excommunications against those that divided the Churches Worship and Communion, and strictly injoining one common Worship, and Sacrament, thro'out all the Churches. *Ignatius* * in his Epistle to the *Magnesiums* affirms that there ought to be but one Worthip, one Prayer, and one Eucharist in the Church. And that by the Church, he means the Catholick Church, is evident from what he writes to the *Philadelphians*, where having recommended to them the very same things as he did to the *Magnesiums*, he enforces his Exhortation with this Argument †, that there was but one Church which the Apostles with much Labour and Pains founded from one end of the Earth to another. And that a Schism in any particular branch of the Christian Church, was deem'd by the Primitive Fathers as a Schism in the Catholick Body, appears from St. *Cyprian*, who says of *Felicissimus* and his Party, who had only made a Schism in the Church of *Carthage*, that ** they were Rebels against the Catholick Church, and of *Novatian*, who had only deserted the Communion of the Church at *Rome* ††, that tho Christ has instituted but one Church, which is divided thro'out the World into many Members; he (*Novatian*) contrary to the strict Unity of the Catholick Church, endeavours to establish a human Church.

Let me add, that when || St. *Cyprian* and others,

* Μία προσέυχη, μία δέσσις, ἐν θυσιαστήριον.

† Μία Εκκλησία ἣν ἱδρύναντο οἱ ἅγιοι Ἀπόστολοι ἀπὸ πρῶτων ἕως πρῶτων ἐν τῷ αἵματι Χριστοῦ οἰκείοις ἰδεῶσι καὶ πόνοις.

** Contra Ecclesiam Catholicam Rebelles, Ep. 59. Ox. Pam. 55.

†† Cum sit per totum Mundum una Ecclesia in multa membra divisa, ille post Dei traditionem, post connexum & ubiq; conjunctam Ecclesiae unitatem, humanam conetur Ecclesiam.

|| Episcopus est Unus, cujus, a singulis, in solidum, pars tenetur, Ecclesia quoque una est. &c. Cyp. de Unit. Eccl.

Non ignoramus—Unum Episcopum in Ecclesia Catholica esse debere. Ep. Cornel. Cypriano, N° 49. Ox.

assert, that there ought to be but one Episcopacy or Priesthood in the Christian Church, their meaning is, that the Worship and Sacrament throughout the whole Catholick Church should be as open to all Christians, and should be as freely resorted to by them, as opportunity offers, as if the whole Church met in one place under one Bishop. Where this free Communication is preserved, between the Worship and Sacrament of the several Branches of the Christian Church, her Unity is not destroy'd by any little modal Differences, in her Episcopacy, Government, or Liturgy. And on the contrary, where this Communication is cut off by setting up Worship against Worship, and Altar against Altar, there is a formal Schism, even tho the opposite Party's have exactly the same Orders of Church Officers, and retain the same Modes and Ceremonies both in their Worship and Communion.

Upon the whole therefore it appears evident to me, that the relative Unity of the Church can't be preserved, without maintaining, as I have said, a free Communication between its Worship and Sacrament.

Nor are our Differences in the Mode of publick Worship, in the manner of celebrating the Eucharist, in the form of Ecclesiastical Polity, or in Opinion, at all inconsistent with this Duty, as long as the Worship, Polity and Sacrament of the whole Church is one and the same, and suffers no essential Change in Virtue of them.

And now to put an end to this long Discourse; we learn from the Premises, how unjustly the Protestant Church has been charged by the Roman Church with Schism, for renouncing her Communion. For by her Impositions and Corruptions, both in her Worship and Communion, these are become Antichristian, and as such are justly renounced by us.

Nor

Non is is with more Reason and Justice; that several Denominations of Protestants, charge each other with Schism, purely on account of their Differences in matters, which are left to the Choice and Determination, either of particular Persons or particular Christian Societies. Let us bless God, that we are happily delivered from the merciless Tyranny of a set of Men, who not only place the Unity of the Church on a wrong Foot, but are for persecuting all that refuse to come into the Scheme which they have proudly formed and prescribed. Let us rejoice in the Goodness of God, who has, under the present Government, secured to us, our Liberty, and given us a pleasing Prospect of having so valuable a Blessing transmitted down to Posterity.

But let us take care not to abuse this our Liberty, by suffering the things in which we differ from the rest of our Brethren, to lead us into a Conduct that has the least Colour of Schism or Uncharitableness. Let us look on Churches of other Denominations as Sister Churches, let us maintain brotherly Love; let us make our Regards to our own Denomination subordinate to our Concern for the Peace and Welfare of the whole Body; and finally, let us leave our Worship and Communion open to all good Christians. And if in these respects we behave our selves becoming the Gospel of Christ, we shall have the Pleasure of reflecting upon our Dissent from others as void of Schism, and perfectly consistent with the Doctrine of St. Paul, who says, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

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 COMMUNION
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